

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for setting a subscriber-specified limit on the duration of a voice channel communication, the method comprising:

receiving a communication from a subscriber on a first network element, said communication causing said first network element to send a request to a second network element;

in response to said request, sending a message from said second network element to said first network element, causing said first network element to request entry of demarcation information, wherein said demarcation information comprises a demarcation interval; the demarcation information applying to communications for which a subscriber's directory number is an origination point or a termination point;

receiving said demarcation information at said first network element; communicating said demarcation information to said second network element, causing said second network element to store said demarcation information; and

initiating a billing of the subscriber for accepting and enforcing said demarcation information;

wherein said subscriber provides said demarcation information;

and wherein said demarcation interval specifies at least one of a time interval or a monetary amount; the demarcation information implementing one or more of: associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding demarcation interval, or identifying one or more directory numbers of other subscribers to which a corresponding demarcation interval does not apply, or associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding default demarcation interval; and

wherein said demarcation interval applies to all communication on the voice channel between a subscriber directory number and a directory number of the respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers, such that the subscriber directory number is either an origination point or a termination point for the communication on the voice channel.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein storing said demarcation information comprises:

comparing said demarcation interval to a default demarcation interval;

determining which quantity is a lesser quantity; and

storing said lesser quantity as said demarcation interval.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said demarcation information further comprises a time period to which the demarcation interval applies.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said demarcation information further comprises identification information for a first station participating in said voice channel communication.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said demarcation information further comprises identification information for a second station participating in said voice channel communication.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first network element comprises a service switching point.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said second network element comprises a service control point.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a demarcated voice channel communication that is demarcated as specified by a subscriber, the method comprising:

receiving a communication at a first network element, said communication having identification information associated therewith, including identification information for a first station and a second station;

providing said identification information from said first network element to a second network element;

in response to receiving said identification information, said second network element:

determining a demarcation interval for said communication based on demarcation information provided by a the subscriber, wherein said demarcation interval specifies at least one of a time interval or a monetary amount; the demarcation information applying to communications for which a subscriber's directory number is an origination point or a termination point; the demarcation information implementing one or more of: associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding demarcation interval, or identifying one or more directory numbers of other subscribers to which a corresponding demarcation interval does not apply, or associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding default demarcation interval; wherein said demarcation interval applies to all communication on the voice channel between a subscriber directory number and a directory number of the respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers, such that the subscriber directory number is either an origination point or a termination point for the communication on the voice channel; and

providing a demarcation message to said first network element,
said demarcation message including said demarcation interval;

in response to receiving said demarcation message, said first network
element:

routing said communication for connection between said first station and said
second station,

indicating the expiration of said demarcation interval, and

initiating a billing of the subscriber for said providing of said demarcated voice
channel communication.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said first
network element indicating the expiration of said demarcation interval comprises said
first network element playing a demarcation signal, indicating said expiration of said
demarcation interval.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said first
network element indicating the expiration of said demarcation interval comprises said
first network element effecting the disconnection of said communication.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said identification
information comprises a password, said password causing said second network element
to determine that said demarcation interval is infinite.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said second
network element determining said demarcation interval comprises said second network
element determining said demarcation interval based on demarcation information relating
to said first station, said demarcation information being accessed through said
identification information.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said second
network element determining said demarcation interval comprises said second network

element determining said demarcation interval based on demarcation information relating to said second station, said demarcation information being accessed through said identification information.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said second network element determining said demarcation interval comprises said second network element determining said demarcation interval based on a monetary rate for said communication as calculated using said identification information.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, after said first network element playing said demarcation signal, further comprising said first network element effecting the disconnection of said communication.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

after said first network element routing said communication, said first network element: measuring the duration of said communication, and providing the measured duration of said communication to said second network element; and

in response to receiving said measured duration of said communication, said second network element deducting said duration from said demarcation interval set by said subscriber.

19. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said first station is an originating station for said demarcated voice channel communication.

20. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said first station is a terminating station for said demarcated voice channel communication.

21. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said first network element comprises a service switching point.

22. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said second network element comprises a service control point.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A system for setting a subscriber-specified limit on the duration of a demarcated voice channel communication, the system comprising:

a first network element, functionally connected to a telecommunications network;

a second network element, functionally connected to said telecommunications network, wherein said second network element comprises:

a subscriber-controlled call demarcation entry component for accepting subscriber-specified demarcation information, and

a demarcation information data store, wherein said demarcation information defines a demarcation interval setting forth at least one of a time interval or a monetary amount; the demarcation information applying to communications for which a subscriber's directory number is an origination point or a termination point; the demarcation information implementing one or more of: associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding demarcation interval, or identifying one or more directory numbers of other subscribers to which a corresponding demarcation interval does not apply, or associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding default demarcation interval; wherein said demarcation interval applies to all communication on the voice channel between a subscriber directory number and a directory number of the respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers, such that the subscriber directory number is either an origination point or a termination point for the communication on the voice channel;

a link functionally connecting said first network element and said second network element; and

a billing component for initiating a billing of the subscriber for said providing of said demarcated voice channel communication.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said demarcation information further comprises a time period to which the demarcation interval applies.

26. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said demarcation information further comprises identification information for said first station.

27. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said demarcation information further comprises identification information for a second station.

28. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said caller-controlled call demarcation entry component further comprises a monetary rate to demarcation interval converter.

29. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said first network element comprises a service switching point.

30. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein said second network element comprises a service control point.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) A system for providing a demarcated voice channel communication that is demarcated as specified by a subscriber, the system comprising:

a telecommunications network;

a first network element, functionally connected to said telecommunications network;

a second network element, functionally connected to said telecommunications network, wherein said second network element comprises:

a call demarcation component, and

a demarcation information data store for storing demarcation information, wherein said call demarcation component is capable of determining a demarcation

interval from the demarcation information; the demarcation information applying to communications for which a subscriber's directory number is an origination point or a termination point; the demarcation information implementing one or more of: associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding demarcation interval, or identifying one or more directory numbers of other subscribers to which a corresponding demarcation interval does not apply, or associating each of a respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers with a corresponding default demarcation interval; wherein said demarcation interval applies to all communication on the voice channel between a subscriber directory number and a directory number of the respective plurality of directory numbers of other subscribers, such that the subscriber directory number is either an origination point or a termination point for the communication on the voice channel;

a link functionally connecting said first network element and said second network element;

a billing component for initiating a billing of the subscriber for said providing of said demarcated voice channel communication; and

a first station functionally connected to said first network element,

wherein said demarcation information is provided by a subscriber;

and wherein said demarcation information specifies at least one of a time interval or a monetary amount.

33. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said first network element comprises a demarcation signal component.

34. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said first network element comprises a communication disconnection component.

35. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said identification information comprises a password, said password causing said second network element to determine that said demarcation interval is infinite.

36. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 32, wherein said demarcation information further comprises a first station demarcation interval.

37. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 32, wherein said demarcation information further comprises a second station demarcation interval.

38. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said call demarcation component further comprises a monetary rate to demarcation interval converter.

39. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said first station is an originating station for said demarcated voice channel communication.

40. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said first station is a terminating station for said demarcated voice channel communication.

41. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said first network element comprises a service switching point.

42. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said second network element comprises a service control point.

43. (Canceled)